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STORIES AND SKETCHES FROM PACIFIC COUNTY

[Isaac H. Whealdon is an old settler in the Willapa country. For the benefit of posterity he has written down these stories and sketches, which, through his friend, T. C. Elliott of Walla Walla, he has transmitted to the Washington Historical Quarterly. After this article was in type news was received that the aged pioneer author met a tragic death near Willapa on June 15, 1913.—Editor.]

The Sunset-Pacific Monthly has in its issue for May, 1912, an article on the Tomanowos rose and how it came into existence. This communication by Samuel M. Evans is introduced by a beautiful legend—The Breath of the Chinook—and this legend brings to my memory one related to me by an old Indian named Matil.

A long, long time ago there was no peninsula or bay or Indians, but one day there came from the siah cold illahee [far cold country] a big canoe with a hundred warriors with their klootchmen and papooses. They tried to enter the Columbia, but hiyu winds, hiyu skookum pe-wake, yaka charco copa [but great strong winds prevented an entrance] Columbia. So they paddled ashore just where the hill and rocks terminate at the south end of what is now the peninsula. Here they moored their big canoe, tying the stern to the rocks at the south and anchoring her bow to the north. Caching their paddles and other things in a cave in the rocks, they took the old Indian trail for the Columbia river and what is now old Chinook.

After many moons they returned, charco miami, halo, kanim. Yaka nanich okok kanim yaka clatawa keekwulee icta tenas sandspit. No, there was not a sign of their canoe, only they found a little sandspit with a clam bed and the ocean on the west. A few small pine trees grew on top. At the east were some bushes with hiyu olallies of a bright red color. These were cranberries. A little father out to the east, tenas siah mitlite tenas chuck. This was only a little water, but 'tis now Whealdon's Pond or Black Lake. When the Indians saw this they built a house on their sand sunken canoe and their children grew and multiplied and as the tribe grew so grew the tiny sandspit and a little bay was formed which became a mighty water. So from the big canoe grew the peninsula and the bay and from the one hundred Indians grew the Shoalwater tribe.

Acelan's Story

There used to be an Indian about Oysterville some forty years back, who was undoubtedly of the royal family.

This young man was, for his chance in life, very intelligent; he had quite a little farm cleared up and in cultivation, and had planted a nice little orchard. It was situated on the place now owned by Mr. John Hill, a little above the Nasel Landing and known as the I. H. Whealdon homestead.

But to our story—I once asked Acelan about the earliest account the Indians had of the first white men to visit our bay, and this is the story he told:

"Ahncuttie ict tenas schooner, yaka charco siah copa cold illahee"—(a long time ago a little schooner came from a cold country far to the north).

She hove to, just outside our bar, lowered away a whale boat and manned it with "toltum tillicums" (110 men), pulled over the bar into what was first called Lighthouse Cove, but now North Cove, which was then a fine landlocked harbor.

It was "tenas sun" (early morning) when they crossed, so they remained here all that day, trading with the Indians for fish, clams, and deer and elk meat. Acelan said they seemed to be "hias hungry," he also told that they had very long beards and said they were neither Boston nor King George men. That they were "Lushan Tillicums," and no doubt they were Russians and the vessel none other than the "Juno," bought by Count Von Baranoff from Captain De Wolf, an American who sailed into Sitka. Rizanoff and his garrison at Sitka castle were starved out in the winter of 1815-6 and started in the "Juno" for the Columbia river, but then, as now, the water was rough, and so only their whale boat entered and got supplies from the Indians who have always been good and kind to the whites.

This, in brief, was Acelan's account as handed down to him by the Indians of the first white men to enter Willapa Harbor.

Historical Sketches

The first white man to permanently locate on land in Pacific County was John E. Pickernell. He settled at the mouth of the Wallicut river, probably about the year 1842. He has told me that the only man, at that time, who spoke the English language with whom he met was a negro named Saul, who was living nearly where the officers' quarters now stand at Fort Canby.

The first vessel to enter Shoalwater Bay for oysters was the barque "Equity," commanded by Captain Hansen. The ill fated brig, "Robert Bruce," came before Hansen with the "Equity." She arrived at Bruceport December 11, 1851. Her officers consisted of: John Morgan, captain; Sam Winneat, first mate; Thomas Foster, second mate; and for crew, Dick Hilliard, Mark Wineat, Frank Garitson and Dick Millwood. But this vessel took out no oysters, as she was set afire by the cook, an Italian, who escaped in the small boat and was never heard of again. The officers and crew were taken off the burning vessel by the Indians. They landed on the south side of North Shoalwater Bay and founded Bruceport. The first shipment of oysters was made by Captain Morgan and Sam Wineat in the schooner "Equity" about May 12, 1852.

Captain Weldon located at Hawks' Point on the north side of North Shoalwater Bay, just west of the mouth of North river, in the year 1852. With him came Captain Crocker and V. S. Riddell. Weldon got out and shipped to California a cargo of piling on the barque "Palus" with himself as master of the vessel. This was the first shipment of lumber of any kind from our county. Weldon commenced the construction of a water mill in Smith's creek in 1853, but this mill was never finished.

Pacific City was platted in 1851 by J. D. Holman, who settled in 1850. E. G. Loomis and another man, whose name has escaped me. But before the plat was made Mr. Holman had completed a fine and substantial hotel of one hundred rooms. This hotel, however, was afterward burned by United States troops, Mr. Holman receiving indemnity from the government. E. G. Loomis, Mr. Holman, and the other individuals built at Pacific City the first steam saw mill ever built in Pacific County. It was afterward moved to the John Crellins Donation Claim, near Nahcotta.

Captain James Johnson, the first Columbia river bar pilot, settled at Whealdonsburg, that is, Ilwaco, in the year 1848 and was drowned off the Columbia river bar by the capsizing of his pilot sloop in the year 1854.

The first court convened in Pacific County was held at Chinook in the spring of 1853, and was presided over by Judge Monroe, a Kentuckian, appointed by President Pierce. Court was held in Job Lamley's dwelling house. Job Lamley, first sheriff of our county, had the summoning of the first jury. Many years afterward he gave me their names as he then recalled them to his memory: John Mildrum, foreman; Henry Feister, who was our first representative and county clerk; E. G. Loomis; William Edwards, who was afterward murdered by Indians; Hiram Brown; John

V. Pickernell; Henry Neese and Thomas Martin. All that was done at this term of court was that the grand jury found two true bills.

As our first representative, J. W. Cruthers was elected, but died before taking his oath of office. Then Henry Feister took the place, but fell dead just as he was stepping up to the bar to take the oath of office. Finally James C. Strong was elected and served his full term, thus really making him Pacific County's first representative in the state legislature.

The first salmon cannery in this county was built at Chinook by Ellis, Jewett and Chambers in the year 1870, J. G. Megler joining them in 1871.

The first salmon packed in salt was put up by Patrick J. McGowan in 1854, and was shipped in the "Jane A. Falkenburg." This last date may be wrong.

ISAAC H. WHEALDON.